All of the previous claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a). After the entry of the numbers of claims as requested above, the current claims at issue are: claims 1-8, 10-18, 20-21, 24-26 and 33-46. Referring to the previous claims: claim 1 has been amended; claims 42-46 have been added; claims 24-26, 35 and 36 have been canceled and claims 2-8, 10-18, 20-21, 33-34 and 37-41 remain unchanged. For the reasons set forth below, Applicants respectfully request that the claims be allowed and the case passed to issue.

Response to Rejection of Claims 1-5, 10-14, 17, 18, 20, 21, 24-26, 33-39, and 41

The rejection of claims 1 and 21, respectively, is partly based on what is disclosed in Clanton. Reference is first made to claim 1. When objecting to the claimed feature "allocating a set of time slots to a circuit-switched channel" the Examiner refers to the "downlink channel" of Clanton. On the other hand, when objecting to the feature "associating the allocated set of time slots to said first channel with a first level of priority" the Examiner refers to a channel state of a time slot. Such a time slot represents a channel which is a mere fraction of the downlink channel. More particularly, the downlink channel consists of eight such channels, or time slots, having each an individual channel state. This confuses the interpretation of what is actually disclosed in Clanton, as set forth in the Office Action.

In the presently amended claim 1 the channel definition has been further clarified, such that it is clearly expressed that a bitstream propagating in the network is divided into frames; that a recurrent frame of those frames is divided into time slots; and that circuit-switched channels are allocated respective sets of time slots of those time slots. Thus, each frame comprises time slots of several channels. In Clanton communication by means of frames occurs on the downlink "channel". Each frame consists of eight time slots, and each channel

is allocated a single and individual time slot thereof. Consequently, the "channel" of the present application should be compared with the one time slot "channel" of Clanton.

This means that the feature of "allocating a set of time slots to a circuit-switched first channel" is not disclosed in Clanton. Consequently, Clanton does not disclose "associating the allocated set of time slots to said first channel with a first level of priority".

Further, the Examiner states that the claimed features "receiving a request for time slots for a circuit-switched second channel associated with a second level of priority", comparing said first and second levels of priority", and "determining whether or not to deallocate time slots from said first channel, and allocate the deallocated time slots to said second channel, based upon said comparison", are not disclosed in Clanton but in Beyda.

Beyda discloses a circuit-switched system wherein user devices communicate via a network. The user devices are able to identify a communication as having a higher or lower priority. The lower priority channels are identified as being droppable. If a user device desires to communicate on an already occupied channel, a network supervisor compares priority levels of the requested channel and the existing channel, and if the existing channel is droppable and the requested channel is associated with a higher priority level than the existing one, the existing channel transmission will be ended and the new channel will be set up.

The method of Beyda is limited to reallocating a whole channel, while the claimed method of this invention is flexible in that typically only a subset of the set of time slots allocated to the first channel are reallocated to the second channel. In claim 1 this is expressed by "determining whether or not to deallocate time slots from said first channel". Thus, at least that feature of claim 1 is not disclosed by Beyda.

Thus, Clanton and Beyda do not teach all of the claim limitations of claim 1. The non-disclosed limitations pertain to the handling of multiple time slots per channel both regarding the allocation of the time slots to a channel and the deallocation of at least some of those time

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slots form that channel in favour of allocating them to another channel. Nowhere in Clanton and Beyda is one of ordinary skill in the art able to find any leads for handling such operations. In light of this the rejection of claim 1 is respectfully traversed.

Furthermore, since claims 2-5, 10-14, 17, 18, 20, 37-39, and 41 are dependent on claim 1 they are patentable as well for at least the reason of dependency. Similarly, claims 33 and 34 are also dependent on claim 1 and, thus, patentable for at least dependency.

The features of Claim 21 are related to the features of claim 1 to such an extent and in such a respect that it is evident that neither claim 21 is obvious in view of Clanton and Beyda.

Response to Rejection of Claims 6-8

Claims 6-8 are dependent on claim 1, and consequently they are patentable at least for the reason of dependency.

Response to Rejection of Claims 15, 16, and 40

Claims 15, 16, and 40 are dependent on claim 1, and consequently they are patentable at least for the reason of dependency, as well.
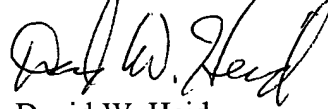
CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections be withdrawn and the claims allowed. Should any other action be contemplated by the Examiner, it is respectfully requested that he contact the undersigned at (408) 392-9250 to discuss the application.

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